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PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 49th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 8 December, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. HUSLID (Norway)
(Vice-President)

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In the absence of Mr. Somavía (Chile), Mr. Huslid (Norway), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 4.55 p.m.

COMMITTEE FOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (continued)

Consideration of draft resolution E/1993/L.46

The PRESIDENT drew the attention of the Council to the programme budget implications of the draft resolution as set out in document E/1993/L.47.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) said that a meeting of the Group of 77 had been held to consider draft resolution E/1993/L.46. A number of important concerns had emerged. First, the matter of regional and thematic balance had not been sufficiently delineated with regard to either the Group of Experts on Development or to the panels of experts to be selected by the Secretary-General. Since the reports of those experts would have great bearing on the process that would follow, that was an issue of serious concern to the Group of 77. In the Group's view, regional and thematic balance must be guaranteed in the general roster as well as in the thematic panels. Secondly, while the preservation of the functions of the Committee for Development Planning was referred to in the preambular part of the draft resolution, it should be included in the operative part as well, and should be considered one of the responsibilities of the new group of experts. Thirdly, the creation of small panels of experts would make it difficult to arrive at a broad view of development and development planning, and a larger, interdisciplinary body of 20 to 25 experts might therefore be preferable. Fourthly, the Group of Experts on Development should be nominated by the Secretary-General and appointed by the Economic and Social Council, as was done in the case of the Committee for Development Planning.

Mr. ORLIANGE (France) inquired whether conducting its work in small panels and occasionally meeting in full plenary sessions was not the usual practice of the Committee for Development Planning.

Mrs. RUFFING (Secretary of the Committee for Development Planning) said that the small panel approach had indeed been the working modality of the

(Mrs. Ruffing)

Committee for Development Planning for many years. During the previous three years, three working groups had each prepared substantive chapters on a single theme that responded to interests of the Committee, intergovernmental bodies, the Council or the General Assembly itself. The plenary meetings had served to integrate those three working-group papers. The draft resolution departed from that practice only in that it proposed an increased number of working groups which could therefore interact more directly with the Council's agenda. He pointed out, as well, that the Committee for Development Planning did not adhere to a strict formula for geographical distribution. An attempt was made to reflect the membership of Economic and Social Council, but with regard to the panels, it had been deemed too difficult to combine expertise in subjects with geographical origin.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) welcomed the clarifications provided by the Secretary, and suggested that the membership of the Group of Experts on Development might be expanded from 24 to 40.

The PRESIDENT said that the question of enlarging the membership from 24 to 40 had not been raised before. He suggested that the Group of 77 should draft amendments, which could then be accommodated into the draft resolution at the remaining meetings of the substantive session.

Mr. MONGBE (Benin) said that one of the tasks before the United Nations was to establish equitable geographical distribution at all levels of the Organization, and the Council too was constrained to abide by that principle. Experts could be found in every region of the world. His delegation was willing to be flexible on all issues but that one.

Mr. PORTOCARERO (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union, commended the draft resolution and pointed out that much progress had been made in accommodating the views of the Group of 77, the European Union and others. Some of the legal points implicit in the text would perhaps, however, need to be made more clear. His delegation favoured spelling out the question of thematic balance; but since the Committee for Development Planning was not strictly speaking an intergovernmental body, more flexibility was permissible with regard to regional distribution. The principle governing the composition of the new Group of Experts on Development should, however, be one of inclusion, not exclusion. Furthermore, his delegation felt that if the Group was so composed as to represent a broad spectrum of fields of expertise, and if the panels were

(Mr. Portocarero, Belgium)

carefully designed, that small-group approach should not preclude a holistic view. In any case it was not financially practical to hold frequent plenary sessions. Lastly, Belgium would be willing to participate in informal consultations on the draft resolution so as to enable it to be finalized by the end of 1993.

Ms. IRISH (Canada) said that her country commended the draft resolution. In response to the comments made by the representative of Colombia, she observed that the Group of Experts on Development would be somewhat different from the Committee for Development Planning in terms of its operation: the main function of the Committee would be subsumed by the Standing Panel, the functions of which Canada if necessary would be willing to consider expanding. The small panels were designed to supply trouble-shooting advice to intergovernmental bodies, but their mandates would be entirely in the hands of Governments.

The PRESIDENT suggested that the Group of 77 should prepare changes or additions to the draft resolution, with as much restraint as possible, and should present those specific amendments to him. It would also be useful for the Gropup to have some contact with the representatives of those countries that had been active in the discussion. Informal consultations could then be undertaken, and a decision perhaps taken by the end of the session.

Mr. PORTOCARERO (Belgium) inquired if he was correct in his understanding that such amendments would be made to draft resolution E/1993/L.46.

The PRESIDENT confirmed that such was the case.

Mr. AMAZIANE (Morocco) stated that no clear, frank exchange of views had thus far taken place on the matter at hand; rather, it had been a confrontation of set ideas and biases. His delegation had not heard convincing arguments for the need to bring an end to the Committee for Development Planning, which could be improved by the introduction of such elements as an expanded constituency or the diversification of the areas of expertise. Morocco proposed that the Council consider that approach, and suggested that the Group of 77 also reflect on it during its consultations.

The PRESIDENT said that since the draft resolution had been elaborated on the basis of long consultations, the Council should work on the basis of that

(The President)

document. If he heard no objections, he would therefore take it that the Committee wished to proceed in the manner he had described.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.